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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ TERROR CONSTITUTION; BAGHDAD

1. SUMMARY: The major themes in the daily newspapers on July 20 were the constitutional committee's preparations for the referendum and drafting the constitution, and the latest developments of the security situation. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

A. "Clarity in London and ambiguity in Baghdad" (7/20)

Al-Bayyan (affiliated with Islamic Ad-Da'wa Party led by Ibrahim Al-Jafari) published a third-page editorial by Salim Rasool about Muslim scholars' attitude toward terrorist operations in London and Baghdad:

"Muslim scholars from different sects in London have signed a statement in which they condemned the recent terrorist operation. The scholars regard the perpetrators of those attacks as criminals who do not belong in Islam. Most Muslim's agree that the terrorists have distorted Islam by conducting such deeds. However, the scholar's public declaration has a deeper meaning as well. It is an indication of how the London Muslim community was also a victim of the London bombings.

Western extremists now accuse every Muslim of being a terrorist and the London Muslim community is under attack from these people. It was not the terrorist activities that convinced the Muslim scholars to issue their statement but rather the negative consequences to the Muslim community in England. According to the scholars, these actions committed in the name of Islam are criminal in London, but not, it seems, in Baghdad.

Why hasn't the entire Muslim world come out against terrorist activities in Iraq? Why aren't there any statements from Muslim scholars condemning the bombings and the beheadings? The situation in Iraq requires those scholars to announce their attitude against terrorism and bloodshed in Iraq. Some senior scholars like the Al-Azhar Mosque sheikh and the Saudi mufti condemned terrorism in Iraq. However, since those statements came from individuals they accomplished nothing.

If all Muslim scholars spoke out in a united voice against terrorism, terrorists would not be able to recruit any more Muslims to fight in Iraq. Recently at a conference held in Amman, none of the many Islamic figures in attendance spoke the truth about terrorism. None of them condemned the terrorist spreading death in Iraq.

The Iraqi people wish that all Muslims would unite against the Iraqi bloodshed. Terrorism operations in Iraq are committed in the name of resistance however Iraqis are dying in vain and the terrorist are criminals.

The Iraqi Muslim people want the senior Muslim scholars to answer one question. Why do they clearly condemn the London bombings while maintaining an ambiguous attitude concerning terrorism in Iraq?"

B. "Wrong message" (7/20)

Al-Fourat (independent, anti coalition) published a second-page editorial by Majed Fadhel Al-Zuboon about the constitution:

"We hear many opinions these days about the Iraqi constitution from Iraqi politicians and the general population in Iraq. We hear that it is supposed to be ratified by the Iraqi people through a referendum. We hear that there are many different groups trying to work together and that there are many different opinions as to

what the document it should look like.

The Iraqi people seem to be resolved to actively participate in the constitutional process despite the difficulties involved. Their participation is important because the constitution will be the blueprint for the future of Iraq. It will determine both the national and foreign policies of Iraq for a long while to come. Indeed, this process requires local media outlets to educate the people about how to make the constitutional process a success.

By focusing on sectarianism and power sharing, I think that the former Governing Council, which was directly supervised by civil administrator Paul Bremer, gave Iraqis the wrong message. The experiment of the Governing Council has created sectarianism and sectarianism will lead to a separated Iraq. The right to establishing federal territories in Iraq can only be ratified by the Iraqi people. I think that the world will soon learn that the Iraqis do not want their country to be split up into sections. They want a united Iraq. Regarding the national assembly, we believe that that each province must have its own representation. The government must not be organized according to electoral lists. This process will move us away from sectarianism and ethnic power sharing. The seeds of these evils were planted by Bremer and has led to our current situation of suffering and pain."

SATTERFIELD